



Employer Supported Volunteering Policy

**Market House
14 Market Street
Lerwick**

Voluntary Action Shetland

Employer Assisted Volunteering Policy

As part of a commitment to the local community Voluntary Action Shetland (VAS) is committed to employer supported volunteering (ESV). This policy is intended to support, encourage and develop employees by facilitating their involvement in volunteering but recognises that volunteering is a matter of personal choice.

ESV brings benefits to VAS and its staff:

- allows staff to develop and improves their morale and motivation
- increases the skills base and enhances the public perception of the organisation
- improves our links and networks within Shetland's Third Sector.

This policy applies to all employees whether on permanent or fixed term contracts, full time or part-time.

An employee may apply for up to 2 hours per month if the voluntary work is directly related to their post. If the voluntary work is not directly related to their post an employee can apply for the equivalent of 2 days additional paid leave per year. These allowances will be pro rata for part-time staff. Employees must add at least the same amount of hours from their non-working time.

These days/hours must be used singularly and the volunteering must take place during the normal working hours of work of the individual employee.

All volunteering supported by VAS must:

- meet VAS priorities
- address employee interests
- target real community need
- insurance cover must be in place

The release of employees from work to participate in voluntary work must be balanced against the other demands and priorities of VAS and as such, time-off for this purpose is not an entitlement. The Executive Officer may ask staff to postpone volunteering according to the needs of VAS. Time of in lieu may not be claimed for volunteering activities.

Requests for Employee Assisted Volunteering leave must complete the ESV form, this to include the name of the voluntary organisation, the duties that will be undertaken, the date/hours required and a contact name in the organisation, so we can carry out our responsibilities as an employer. This must be submitted to the Executive Officer or nominee for authorisation at least 4 weeks before anticipated date of volunteering.

The Executive Officer reserves the right to contact an organisation to confirm the employee is engaged in voluntary work for the requested number of hours.

VAS recognises that many of its employees already volunteer, and recognises the value of that volunteering to them as individuals, to VAS, and to the Shetland Community.

Employer supported volunteers are covered by employment law, including when they are offsite volunteering. Therefore employers are bound by a 'duty of care' to do everything reasonable to protect their employees from coming to harm whilst volunteering.

The basic principles of 'duty of care' are:

- Ensure the employer supported volunteers are adequately trained
- Ensure that the employer supported volunteers are adequately supported and supervised
- Ensure that employer supported volunteers are not placing themselves in danger
- Ensure the insurance policy covers employees volunteering outside of their place of work.

No employee should undertake volunteering until they are sure the organisation has adequate insurance cover for the type of volunteering to be undertaken. No employee should agree to do employee assisted volunteering until they have received confirmation that their request has been agreed. Once the volunteering has taken place the employee should write a note on the benefits and skills learned from their experience, this will be kept in their personal file.